

EVALUATION INDICATORS

1. Alignment Competence
2. Context Competence
3. Content Competence
4. Language Competence
5. Introduction Competence
6. Structure - Presentation Competence
7. Conclusion Competence

Overall Macro Comments / feedback / suggestions on Answer Booklet:

1.

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All the Best

Section A

1. Environment Sustainability and Economic Development : Mutually Exclusive or Concordant Objectives ?

'No power on Earth can stop an idea whose time has come.'
- Victor Hugo.

The idea of environment sustainability has its genesis in the 1970s. The Club of Rome advocated this idea, and was formally mentioned in the Brundage Commission Report. Over the years, environment sustainability has become a focal point of government action and civil society engagement. The question frequently arises, that whether environment sustainability is the antithesis of economic development?

In this essay, I shall be arguing that instead of being mutually exclusive, environment sustainability shares the same

and concordant objectives with economic development. The ultimate goal of both is the progress of the human race in a sustained manner. By quoting examples, I shall be showing how the engagement of environment sustainability with economic development will lead to the best kind of growth of humans.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

To understand the supposed exclusivity of the two ideas, it is imperative to know how this approach came into being. Before industrialisation's advent, growth and economic trade was never seen as damaging the environment. With the large scale technological advancements such as the steam engine by James Watt, setting up of large scale factories

and clearing of pristine forest land for plantations, the natural environment of cities and villages underwent a change. Soot and smog enveloped cities like London, and in the colonies, wide tracts of forest land was cleared. Laws such as the Forests Act, 1927 aimed to further this hegemony of colonial control over forests.

This led to the sowing of seeds of the opinion that economic development necessarily involves decimating the natural environment. The industrialists of the 19th and 20th century too did not seem to mind any harm to forests, as it was believed there is ample of forest land left and there action is not going to make any difference.

In 1950s, Rachel Carson

released her path breaking book 'silent spring' which brought attention to the impact of economic development on the environment.

Since then, the idea of sustainable development gained traction. At the same time, globalisation in the post war period combined with the emergence of newly independent states led to double digit growth in various areas. As incomes rose, inequalities became deeper. Many a times, this was at the expense of the environment.

The idea of economic development includes better infrastructure, better income, better investment, better choices of consumers. But all of these, are merely the means to achieve the end of

progress of humankind to the best of its capabilities. If compared with the goal of environment sustainability, it will be seen that the goals of the two are mutually concordant.

Sustainable environment too refers to an environment which allows for the progress of humankind by ensuring future generations have access to the same resources as us.

The amalgamation of the two ideas gives us the novel concept of sustainable development, i.e. Economic development that gives due regard to environment sustainability. First advocated by Brundtland Commission and in the 1972 UN Convention, the idea of sustainable development

allows for economic growth & development that fully understands the importance of the environment for present and future generations.

Since then, developments both in India and abroad show that sustainable development is neither difficult to achieve nor too costly. Instead, it is a need of the hour. With the threat of anthropogenically induced climate change looming large over us, the constant thinning of the ozone layer, the extinction of species even before we have discovered them, increased human-animal conflicts, many legislative and international interventions have taken place.

THE INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Internationally, we have the

many UN Conventions under
UN Framework Climate Change
Convention. What started in 1992
with Rio has now reached the
level of the binding Paris
agreement. We have the
convention against desertification.
We have the Montreal Protocol
against Persistent Organic Pollutants
which shows the commitment
of the governments to ensure
that its industries are not
using harmful CFC based
products. Its recent amendment
at Kigali to phase out even
HFCs that were previously
considered safe shows how
important environment is considered
to be for economic growth in a
sustained manner. Further,
the efforts against oil spills
& other aquatic pollutants

is another welcome step in this direction.

The fast rising superpower China's commitment towards the Paris Agreement even after its arch rival USA pulled out of it by citing economic growth as more important than the environment offers a hope of ray. That a country as industrialised as China seeks to work towards improving the environment shows that growth is not antithetical to environment protection.

INDIA'S RESPONSIBLE GROWTH

On our country level, we have a fantastic tradition of protecting the environment.

Locals have always fought back whenever the environment is threatened. For instance,

the Chipko Movement, & the recent triumph of the Niyamgiri hill Kondh tribes over the mining giant Vedanta. Our government too recognises this. Our country has a plethora of environment friendly laws - we have the Air Act, the Water Act, the Wildlife Protection Act, Biodiversity Act. We have norms for development along Coastal Regulation Zones and National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 recognises the rights of tribals over their land.

The recently legislated Compensatory Afforestation Act too shows our strong political will in ensuring sustainable development. The Act provides for

industrialists to compensate the environment by conducting afforestation for every acre of forest deforested by them. Along with the Land Acquisition Act, 2013 we have a framework which ensures that the environment and the people living in the concerned area are rehabilitated.

Our laws also provide for a compulsory Environmental Impact Assessment to be conducted before any land can be acquired.

The fact that our country has the highest growth rate among all economies of the world despite having stringent environment clearance norms speaks volumes about the

ease and viability of development that goes hand in hand with the environment.

Another way to augment economic growth and development with environment is through Corporate Social Responsibility, introduced recently by s.135 of the Companies Act, 2013. Companies can do their bit for the environment through this manner.

Yet, despite all the laws in place, there is no sign of complacency. There is innovation and research going on to further converge environment with growth. We have made strides in the field of renewable energy by setting an ambitious target for 175 GW of Renewable

Energy by 2022. Carbon credit trading and setting up of green stock exchanges is on the rise. Green and blue bonds are being traded. There is a renewed enthusiasm to conserve the environment.

The education of children in this regard is of prime importance as they are the leaders of tomorrow. Animal migration corridors are being set up through industrial zones and sometimes across international borders to allow for animals to cope up with their shrinking habitat. All this, paints a positive picture.

The Way Ahead

As demonstrated above, environment

sustainability and economic growth are concordant. While the two focus more on different parameters, when combined, we get the best of both worlds.

Sustainable development will ensure a living, breathing world and economy even long after we have gone. It will help prevent any

apocalypse from happening as portrayed in various movies such as WALL-E. Because, after

all, there is no point of having state of the art durable infrastructure and creating loads of money if our Earth become inhabitable and there's no one left to enjoy the fruits of our economic growth.

Sustainable development, therefore,

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Section B

Life Style Diseases : Why to take them seriously ?

'Health is the greatest wealth'. This oft quoted sentence represents an undeniable truth. We are fully dependant on our health to pursue any vocation of our life, yet health is more often than not ~~not~~ the last priority for many of us.

In this essay, I will be tracing the rise of lifestyle diseases. I will then be arguing that we require a holistic view towards a healthy life. The focus should be on prevention rather than cure, and for that, we may require a lifestyle change.

Any conversation with one's grandparents or other elderly relatives throws open the window to a whole different world. A world where the sky was so clear that stars could be seen twinkling even from the dines, the air so fresh, and comparatively less competition and pressure at work and for studies. People used to walk frequently, cycle enough, perform enough manual activities, eat home cooked light food. Further, as electricity and television was not so common, people used to sleep early and wake up early. The combined effect of this lifestyle was that people were a lot healthier, both physically and mentally. The manual activities done as part of daily life were sufficient in themselves and people did

not have to join any specialised gyms to feel fit; or consult dieticians to feel better.

The Age of Technology

Fast forward to 2017. The life of an average person living in a metropolitan city is mired with stress, fierce competition and habits that do not always promote health.

Fierce competition can be seen in both education and employment. The cut-throat race to enter into a good college or university, followed by a cut throat race to succeed at work and complete work targets has led to the predominance of sitting and working. Constant sitting, eating in stress, not being able to get up enough when our human bodies are

clearly designed for movement
all play have with our
systems.

The long distance to travel
to workplace is covered in
vehicles, as the increasing
distance between home and
work does not allow for
cycling to the workplace.

Cycling also is difficult as
today's air is polluted,
with smog and high concentrations
of particulate matter common.

People therefore avoid venturing
out.

Any attempts to take a
walk or a jog in a park
are also affected by the
decreasing public spaces
available and increasing
pollution.

Adding to this, we have

the advent of technology that has permeated into every aspect of our life. Technology ensures that we do not have to get up to open the door, turn on the fan, as all of it can be done with a click on our smartphone app. Technology also ensures that we do not have to walk in a bustling market to shop for home supplies or clothes, as all of that can be done while sitting in the comfort of our home on a mobile app.

Adding to the woes, is the food choices we make. While raw fruits and vegetables are cheap, more often than not healthy cooked choices are more expensive than fast food like deep fried samosa, greasy

noodles and deep fried poori. The cumulative effect of this is that a working professional living in a city with no time to cook for himself or herself invariably ends up eating unhealthy food while sitting for hours at a stretch in a desk job and completing massive targets.

The above is largely true for the urban educated persons. For the urban and rural poor, occupational diseases such as silicosis to those working in glass factories are common.

And, common to all classes is the increase in mental health conditions. Stress and depression are common with rising loans, rising targets and rising expectations.

Life Style Diseases

All this has led us to a situation where although our government's efforts in curbing communicable diseases are succeeding and the mortality rate is falling, many people are succumbing to early lifestyle diseases, which are commonly non-communicable.

It is very common now-a-days to hear about a seemingly healthy forty year old male dying due to heart attack.

The constant sitting, stress and lack of exercise leads our body to gain weight. The fat deposition in our arteries increases, which makes it difficult for our heart to pump blood for a body whose size is constantly increasing.

This leads to various heart diseases. The prevalence of people with stents in their arteries has increased. Getting bypass surgeries too is becoming common.

The constant sitting leads to posture problems including severe back pain, inability to walk properly and deep vein thrombosis in the legs.

Constant looking at the screen of our laptop and mobile leads to eyesight problems.

Pollution leads to bronchitis, rising incidence of asthma. The nitrates & sulphates present in our polluted air cause mental fatigue, which decreases our productivity.

In fact, all the problems cumulatively affect our

productivity, which affects the output at work and at home. we are unable to perform our duties properly, which ultimately leads to a national growth decline when a considerable section of people are unable to perform. While we might still be on the path of economic growth, with lifestyle diseases we may not be able to grow as well as we could. We will always remain below our capability.

The need for change

Considering the factors mentioned above, it becomes imperative that we as citizens, and the government takes policy measures

to promote a healthy lifestyle. We should take steps to ensure our workforce does not get as oppressed as it is in highly competitive Japan, where hundreds die due to overwork death. There, this phenomenon of overwork death has a name in itself - that of Karoshi, and it has become a major public health issue.

Various steps can be taken in the direction to prevent lifestyle diseases from occurring. Some of these are discussed below.

- The role of Yoga in promoting a healthy lifestyle is rightly being emphasised. Yoga not only is a form of physical exercise, but also helps in controlling stress.

Education on physical fitness being provided from a young age in schools is a good step. The increasing participation of women and girls in sports will encourage more women & girls to remain physically fit.

The government could lay down the model of European nations where a work day is from 10-6, and employees are given enough free time for themselves which they can use to take care of health. This will also help prevent late night work hours and stress.

Further, the rules providing only healthy food in school canteens should be extended to all establishments. Suggestions can be taken from the

community for healthy food options which can be sold at a cheap price in government and private canteens and food stalls. Protein based diet could be preferred.

More events such as marathons and cycling races could be organised to promote an enthusiastic attitude about health.

Organisations, especially the corporate ones, could try having recreational rooms where employees can go to take short breaks. Table tennis and other indoor sports could be promoted this way.

The above suggestions, along with other steps in

this direction will ensure that the growth of our nation is not hindered by human negligence manifesting in the form of lifestyle diseases.

Campaigns against tobacco & smoking are a good step in this direction. Effort could also be made to spread more awareness on occupational diseases which affect the disadvantaged workers, in a like manner as the tobacco campaign.

The Mental Health Bill, 2017 is also a right step in this direction. It will ensure that people open up about their mental health issues and take help. This is relevant

as stress is a leading factor for heart attack.

As the National Health Policy, 2017 rightly puts, the focus must be on prevention.

Prevention of lifestyle non communicable diseases may not reap dividends immediately, but it will surely help in bolstering our economic growth and way of life in the long run.